



FEMA

RECOVERY STRATEGY RS-2006-2

I. TITLE: **Debris Removal Operations**

II. DATE: July 24, 2006

III. PURPOSE:

To establish a strategic framework for providing debris removal assistance in support of a Presidentially declared emergency or major disaster. This high-level Strategy will be supported by separate and more detailed policies addressing the general provisions herein.

IV. SCOPE AND AUDIENCE:

This Strategy applies to emergencies and major disasters declared on or after the date of publication, above, and until superseded. It is applicable to all states eligible to receive assistance under sections 403 and 407 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act; all Federal agencies that may be directed by FEMA to provide such assistance; and all signatories to the National Response Plan.

V. AUTHORITY:

Sections 403 (Essential Assistance) and 407 (Debris Removal) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (hereafter, the Stafford Act), 42 U.S.C. 5121-5206, and implementing regulations at 44 CFR Part 206.

VI. DEFINITIONS/DESCRIPTIONS:

A. **Eligible Public Debris:** Disaster-related vegetative materials, construction and demolition materials, household goods, and other materials deposited (either by the event or a property owner) on *public* property (including public rights-of-way), and which present an immediate health and safety threat to the general public.

B. **Eligible Private Debris:** Disaster-related vegetative materials, construction and demolition materials, household goods, and other materials deposited (by the event) on *private* (personal or commercial) property, and which present an immediate health and safety threat to the general public. *Debris on private property does not typically present an immediate health and safety threat to the general public, so removal is not normally eligible for reimbursement.* However, the Federal Coordinating Officer is authorized to approve the removal of debris from private property when he determines that such debris does present an immediate health and safety threat to the general public, and such removal would be in the public interest.



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C. **Direct Federal Assistance (DFA):** Within the framework of this Strategy, DFA is debris removal assistance provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

D. **Other Federal Agencies (OFA):** Within the framework of this Strategy, OFA refers to other (than FEMA) Federal organizations invested with varying authorities for debris management activities. They include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Coast Guard, and Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and Transportation.

E. **Debris Removal Contractor Registry:** A web-based database that reflects information about and the material and operational capabilities of debris removal contractors, including their organic assets. This registry was developed and fielded as a tool to assist local governments advance plan for, and establish the institutional capability to immediately and effectively manage, debris removal operations.

VII. STRATEGY:

A. OVERVIEW

1. State and local governments have principal responsibility for coordinating and managing debris removal operations, with eligible costs reimbursable under the Public Assistance program.

2. If a State and/or local government lacks the capability to initiate, coordinate and manage debris removal operations following a major disaster, FEMA can provide DFA through a mission assignment to another Federal agency (normally the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) upon request, when it has been demonstrated that the State and/or local government lack the capability to perform or contract for the requested work.

a. *The duration of DFA mission assignments for debris removal will be limited to 60 days from the disaster declaration date.* The Federal Coordinating Officer may approve extensions for up to an additional 60 days, if a State or local government has demonstrated it lacks the capability to assume oversight of the debris removal mission. Additional extensions will require approval of the Recovery Division Director at FEMA Headquarters.

b. Cost-Share. The State cost-share for debris removal costs (applied equally to both State-managed and DFA missions) will be as directed by the President.



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(1) If the President has authorized 100% Federal funding for emergency work under sections 403 or 407 of the Stafford Act, FEMA will provide at 100% Federal share the cost of actual debris clearance and/or removal work accomplished, *not mission assignment task orders initiated*, only during the designated period. This work includes whatever clearance, pick up, hauling, processing and disposal activities FEMA authorizes, *but only during the designated period*.

(2) After the designated period, if further direct Federal assistance for debris clearance or removal is necessary, it will be provided at the prevailing Federal cost share rate for the particular disaster. The State shall agree in advance to reimburse FEMA for the appropriate non-Federal share of the work including the overhead of the Federal agency assigned the task of debris removal.

B. PRE-EVENT PREPARATION AND PLANNING

1. State and Local

(a) State and local governments are encouraged to plan for - and expected to manage - their own debris removal operations following an emergency or major disaster. Direct Federal Assistance, in the form of US Army Corps of Engineers support, is designed *only* to address situations where the level of debris is catastrophic in scale, or where the capabilities of the State and/or local government to effectively manage such operations are overwhelmed.

(b) State and local governments are encouraged and expected to establish pre-event contracts and/or arrangements with local or regional debris removal contractors, to assure the immediate availability of coordinated debris removal support following a debris-producing incident. To assist State and local governments identify available debris removal contractors, FEMA maintains a State/Local-accessible web-based Debris Removal Contractor Registry.

2. Federal. As the Emergency Support Function (ESF) 3 Coordinator and primary Federal provider of Direct Federal Assistance in support of debris removal, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

(a) Maintains seven Debris Removal Planning and Response Teams (PRTs). Each PRT is pre-rostered and fully trained, and ready to deploy within 6 hours to begin operationally planning a Direct Federal Assistance mission.

(b) Maintains advance debris removal contracts, to ensure immediate availability of support.



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(c) Will, 96 hours prior to projected hurricane landfall, commence development of a tailored, operational debris removal plan.

C. PRE-LANDFALL. Upon a Presidential declaration of a pre-landfall *Emergency* (including designation of Category A – Debris Removal and Direct Federal Assistance), FEMA and/or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will, *if warranted*:

1. Activate, if not previously accomplished, Emergency Support Function (ESF) 3 (Public Works and Engineering).
2. Deploy, if not previously accomplished, a team of debris experts to the FEMA Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) to initiate coordination and planning with the State.
3. Deploy (with State consent), debris experts to the State Emergency Operations Center to provide technical assistance and planning support on debris-related issues.
4. Begin, if not previously initiated, assessing the capabilities of threatened State and local governments to effectively coordinate and manage debris removal operations, as well as identify those prospectively requiring DFA.
5. Deploy Debris Planning and Response Teams to affected States.
6. Initiate U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' debris modeling to estimate volume of debris that may be expected given the pre-landfall predictions.
7. Commence development of a tailored, operational debris management plan.
8. As appropriate, activate ESF-3 Support Agencies and Advance Contract Initiative contractor(s) to coordinate and assist in debris management planning.

D. POST-LANDFALL. Upon a Presidential declaration of a post-landfall *Emergency* or *Major Disaster* (including designation of Category A – Debris Removal and Direct Federal Assistance), FEMA and/or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will, *if warranted*:

1. Activate, if not previously accomplished, ESF-3.
2. Deploy, if not previously accomplished, a team of debris experts to the RRCC to initiate coordination and planning with the State.



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3. Deploy, if not previously accomplished (and with State consent) debris experts to the State Emergency Operations Center to provide technical assistance and planning support on debris-related issues.

4. In conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, assess the capabilities of affected State and local governments to effectively coordinate and manage debris removal operations, and identify those requiring DFA.

5. Deploy, if not previously accomplished, Debris Planning and Response Teams to affected States

6. Refine debris model results and participate in Rapid Needs Assessment process to define possible requirements for assistance.

7. Work with State agencies to establish intergovernmental Debris Management Team, as appropriate, to integrate and coordinate debris operations under all authorities and to further develop the operational debris management plan. ESF-3 Support Agencies and Advance Contract Initiative contractor(s) will be activated as appropriate to assist with planning and management efforts.

8. As required, provide Technical Assistance to State/local agencies developing their own debris management capabilities and contracts.

9. Commence debris removal operations under DFA, when State and local governments lack the coordination and management capability, and following request, approval, and mission-assignment.

VIII. ORIGINATING OFFICE: Recovery Division (Public Assistance Branch)

IX. REVIEW DATE: One year from the date of publication.

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R. David Paulison

Director

Federal Emergency Management Agency